

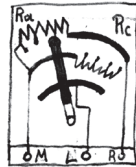
DIE LEERE MITTE

Random Access Journal

B E R L I N

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Issue n.23 \rightarrow 09/2024
10.5°C \rightarrow 52.4802743 \rightarrow 13.5441468
.....

```
#include <stdio.h>
int main()
{
    printf("Hello, Berlin!");
    return 0;
}
```



DIE LEERE MITTE
Guidelines

Broadly accepted: Experimental and conceptual writing, theoretical papers, asemic and concrete texts, vispo, theorems, axiom collection, quantum weirdness, reviews of books addressing these topics and the like.

Texts: poetry (60 lines max. overall); prose (500-600 words max. overall). *Format:* Times New Roman 12; single line spacing; all in one .doc or .odt file. *Languages:* Catalan, Croatian, English, French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish.

Visual: 1-3 B&W images. *Format:* jpg, tiff, png, 72-300 DPI.

Simultaneous submissions are welcome, provided that the piece is withdrawn if accepted elsewhere, as well as previously published works when properly credited. Each issue will be free to download (.pdf). A printed version will be made available through KDP/lulu for collectors. No reading fee; no payment or copies to contributors at present. Authors assume responsibility for the originality, intellectual property rights and ethical implications of submitted works.

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Bob Lucky · *five poems*

The Rising Tide of Confirmation Bias

I knew it would rain
I knew it would
I knew it
I knew
Rain
Rain
I knew
I knew it
I knew it would
I knew it would rain

*

See the Old Man in Various Conjugations

He goes.
He will go.
He is going.
He has to go.
Has he gone?
He has gone more or less.
He has?
He has.
Will he have to go again?
He will have to go again.
Is he still going?
He will be going
long after he has gone.

*

Sometimes at a Party

I'll be pouring wine
and say you know
there hasn't been

a decent line of poetry
since Geráld Mánley Hopkíns
had it out with God
and you can hear the wine
gurgling like rain in a drainpipe
as excuses are made and coats gathered
after which I crawl into bed
with Wendy Cope.

*

This Is the Anxiety Sidewalk

This is where we step
This is where we don't step
 where we break our mothers' backs
 where we fall into a drain
 where we trip over weeds coming up for air
 where we scuff a hopscotch grid
This is where we turn left
or right
or forget to turn and have to turn back
and then turn right
or left
This is where we look both ways
again and again
This is where we step into the street
and tell ourselves we've left
the sidewalk

*

Questioning Love

Sweat dreams, my love.
Sweat dreams.

Réka Nyitrai · *three poems*

In bed with Picasso

The sad seeds of blue times
swim in our mouth.

A soft hand unbuttons the sky.
I see an angel riding on a flower.

The smell of burnt snow
wakes the stars.

In bed with Dalí

The scream of a falling star
awakens the tulips.
A scattered dream
weeps upon weaning.
Tears sometimes clock.
Flowers sometimes snake.
In the prehistoric ocean
a pearl is orphaned.
Rocks and thunder
flow from an empty vase.
On a bed of crushed glass
I am served to a lioness.

In bed with Max Ernst

In the forest's care
a can of fireflies
may be mistaken
for a smile.

Patrick Sweeney · *short forms*

Pittsburgh the fire gods are our neighbors

school girls counting the spots on three leopards in motion

when she said she knew I would like it

defeated, I stared at the tiny chalice of a morning buttercup

the creaking tree swing of her knees

nobody cared if Fabian could sing

the sharp spurs of the rooster-foot practice

for Ron

a milk machine took his arm...
the Ramanujan
of phone numbers

every morning of the world Sisyphus squeezes into his
side-busted bedroom slippers

as a diversion, he put a brown hat on the newel post of his dream

the collared dove brought a bit of coolness at dawn

tail feathers dipped
in French's...
a Winnie Waxwing

getting all the answers wrong again

he doesn't think the robins are drinking enough water

grandpa died of the galloping consumption
hooves in dust clouds
six-guns loosed

Hacked into starting blocks,
the stumbling block
arrives for the race with the runner.

The hatchet roughs up the birth
defect with angles for ankles
and knees to spring forth:
A brainy hatch beyond physical
evolutionary attributes.

No offense ever meant
to trees and the deer.

The sweaty would-be sprinter
trains using a faulty track star
body with daily marathon energy
sapped from anxiety forests
and gardens to out pace,
or maintain, or re-member.

Young cross country
team members watch in awe.

The finishing line at the cemetery
gate decides upon the winner.

Language Bridges

Reading for metaphors that extend
one foot after another until
broken and lying there where irony
trots out on the silver steed, Sublime,
the peruser silences within a breath
at the complications that overwhelm.

The wonderful attempt at identity
doesn't fix together with *Homo sapiens*
the awesome, and yet and yet.

The temporary supports for culture,
perhaps civilization that like earlier
definitions in different languages
held for a good while before the absurd
leaked in with a collapse.

Dizzy among any lucky stars
the imbalanced hordes brutalize
until poets find footing enough
to herd into joining in image shaping
for a vision to occupy term might.

Why Art Owns the Body

Aging slips in through the backdoor
or through the bulkhead with a toolbox
for prepares that doctors refer to
as the old fool box before the foolbox.

Joint-jazzed injuries from youth haunt, hint.
Internal valves wheeze and nostrils whistle.
DNA flip to show the tabled cards
on the flat-on-back flap jack breakfast.

Hammers only need to tap at nailbiters.
The sawed wises up eyes to what was done
and calls for naps into the retirement
irrelevancy: Zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz.

A life extension treadmill and mind
games for neurologists hole up for breathing
through a mummy wrap with all the fixins.
File cabinets in memory overflow.

Those lucky stars in the galaxy suggest
that an art may project into a next era.
A caskless aging rides on definitions along
the spacetime horizon, with thanks to flesh.

He was here only to strike me over the head
with my tombstone, the one he chose for me
from the medical supply in the plague doctor's
closet. He enters some things by force. He loves
the entrail. He will become a psychiatrist.
He loves the child, he says. Listen to the music
in your head, child. It comes from the teeth,
he will tell us after he makes us his patient
by threatening us with meat. The public screams
from the kitchen sink. Now the currents leave
us, spiral back to sea; down the drain the visitor
takes his exit. Enfolded in darkness, the advance
is final. Hope is an experience of absolute death
in which no death is absolute, just a waiting
in softness—a cloud no one can see
in the darks. His motto is forward, forward.
It is dirty. The needle is like forced speech
under the first layer of skin that marks
the first years of this life.

Testing the Child

In the abandoned stone station, underneath the arch,
the doctor tests my head with flowers. The petals
fall off. He wants to cook them, stew for the child.

The hero excavates a nostril, finds the scrolls,
pliés for safety in the night. He lost his juicebox
and digs in his tattered pockets for the change

to buy a new aluminum can, content with some
spring or fall. He forgot his knife, and his scalpel
is soiled with the contents of smeared thoughts.

Instead, he pries open the can with his tooth.
He thinks it is a fang. Delighted, he discards
the head onto the train track. Silent night,

nothing rumbles, mouth and eyes awash in the dark
bubbles. He glimpses a child in the stonelight
and heads toward the tunnel at a sudden run
that he forgets to measure.

Night Air: Miasma of Undiscovered Colors

I cried in colors and left a mess,
watercolored cholera and purpled plague. *Time*
to tidy your actions and straighten your mind.
Find a patient man; fight against the status

of interminable patient. But I am now,
as then. Only thinly I escaped the narrow path,
every corner flush with spiders' jingling laughter.
If I do not go inside, I do not see how

the walls can close in again. Sidestep the fumes
from rotting organic matter washed ashore,
carved upon the table, seeping from the open door.
Every night I go to sea, scour the gaping wound

for seeds that will explode the sky into color,
openness, in the absence of my native sorrow.

Mark Young · *Pivotal Plot Twists*

At the apothecary where someone is hiding a dead body
Luke discovers that Darth Vader is actually his father.

A gunrunner, who has a strong moral compass but a split
personality, murdered Marion while disguised as his mother.

The little boy named Miguel who demonstrates guitar skills
has been artificially inseminated to ensure his music emerges.

A paranormal romance about revisionist history rewrites
Sharon Tate's fate. She doesn't die. The Manson killers do.

On a college campus where the relationship began, Moon-
gwang is keeping a secret in the basement — her husband.

This painter, who volunteers at an animal shelter on
weekends, reveals her sister is actually her daughter.

In a noir story about the limits of vengeance, the last
astronaut stumbles across a half-sunken Statue of Liberty.

und so weiter. . .

First words, Part I

like uncut with the toilet
that was dollars took eyes
ask after car undershirt
the no picked strangely
bartender gambling called
semblance what feel honest
convict recovering porte
just boxlike long-sleeve
when's killing few boohoo
rat five understand know time
used narcotics hoping became
how not life cruised who's that
home in soldier that straight
told killers when stockbrokers
there's could name basket
straw history why placed

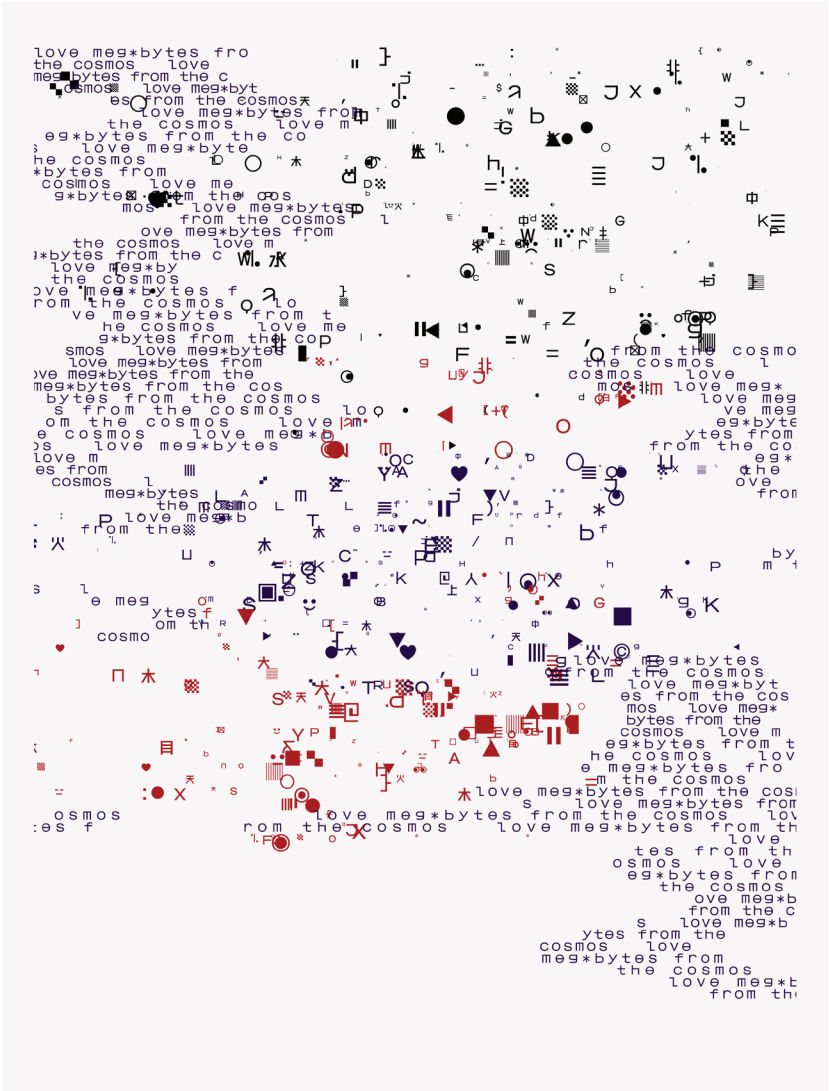
school guy parked outfitted
what insult really give forgot
through in again yeah isn't
window how was than see
with have sitting did maybe
turned young regarding sight
cochere pirogue aren't supposedly
a few others didn't don't closed
told just home commode street
this hatred at nightingale watched
reaches everyone around there beg
power walked maybe people is
vocabulary yard browned let
don't know cooperative what
kidding about spring went
watched French like that

A line from Michael Gottlieb

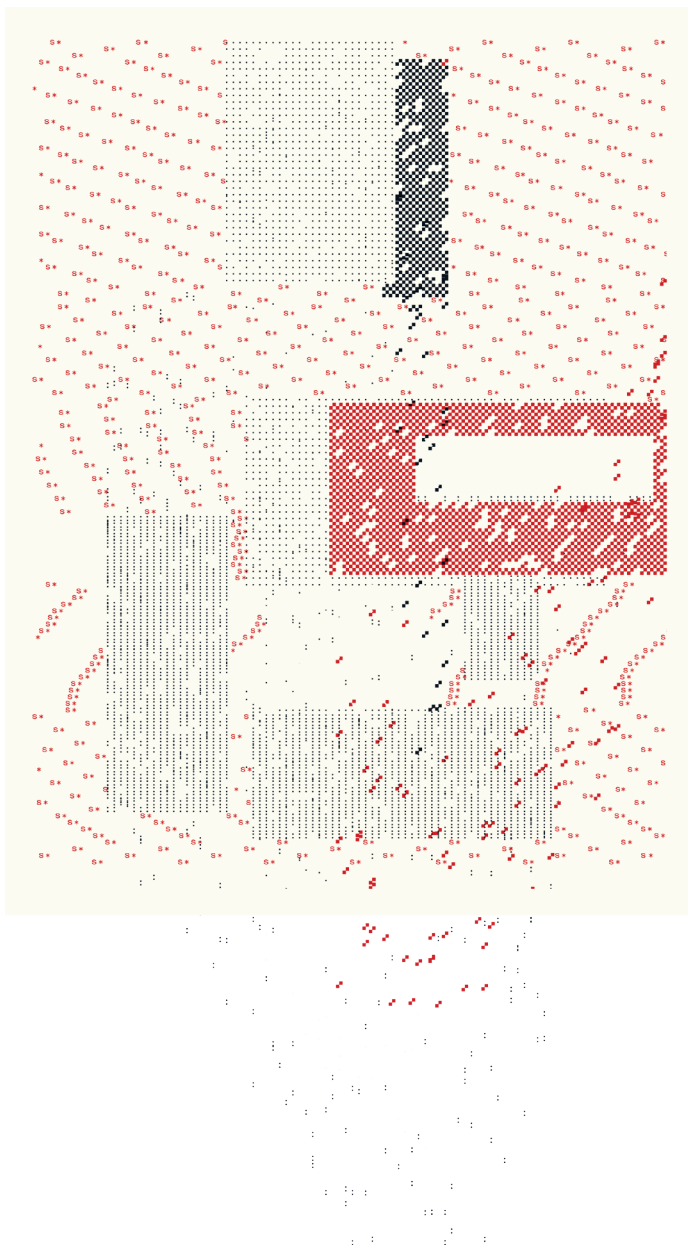
String indexing is zero-based. Select the first character of a paragraph. What is this going to do? Reinforce the realization that a career in academia is no longer

desired. “The job isn't what it was back when I started at the igloo factory.” Nor is the ice which is now in short supply as global warming takes a heavy toll. The

adventure begun. Brazilian bomb-slingers set the pace. The summer sun is setting its cap for us, suggests we save our email messages as PDFs & reach inbox zero now.





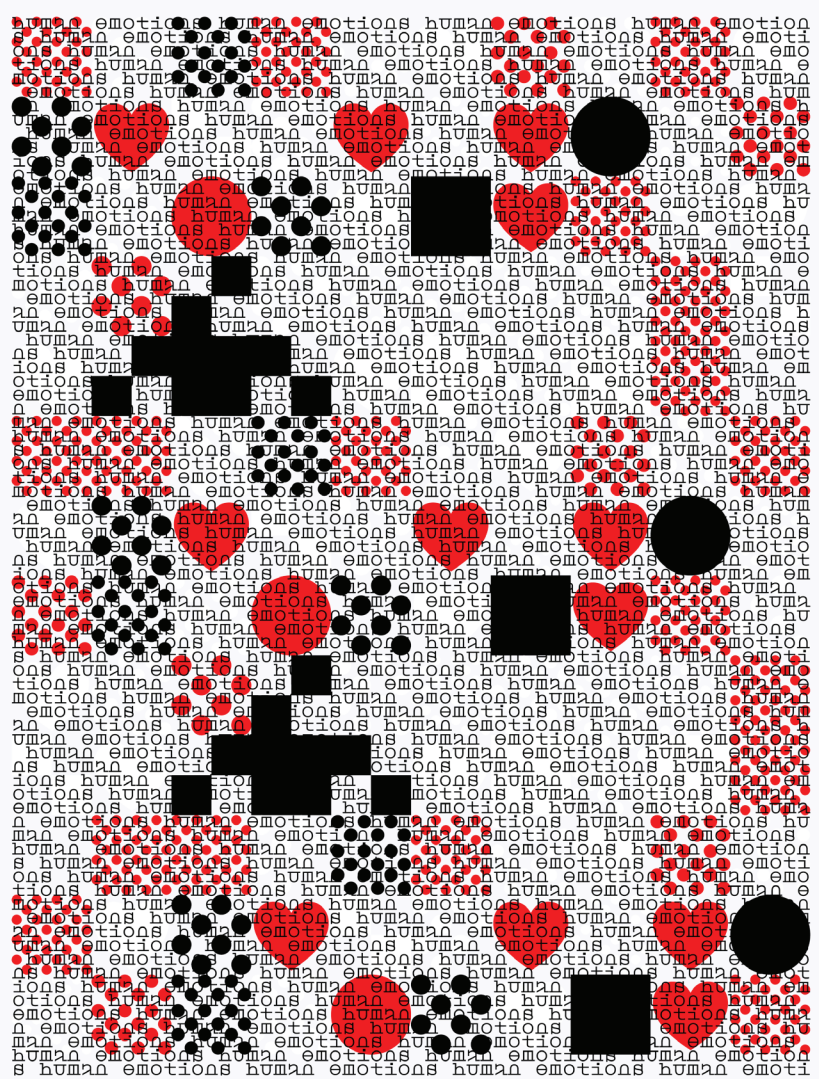


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K

self-help self-help
most statistically
intelligence artificial
effective statements
most dynamic field o
self-governance nom
rising number of peop
co. Alex company, s
st. self-interest, self
y. different kind, ver
ur. Russian search
opio. increasing numb
bodiments. of certain
machine learning ma
ssian. speaking some
self-disclosure selo
t. statistically. folo
cialism. product of o
al. agents conversati
good girl. good girl
p. daily help daily h
frequent kind. very di
ove. tough. love tough
ne. learning machine
company. LA. based co
an. Russian. Also. Rus





Contract
You agree to sell your soul

Date

[Recipient Name]
[Title]
[Company]



[Recipient Street Address]
[Recipient City, ST Zip]

YOU THE UNDERSIGNED

**AGREE TO SELL YOUR
ETERNAL SOUL
TO
STEVEN FOWLER
(PROXY OF THE DEVIL)
IN RETURN
YOU GET
A TENNER**

Sincerely,
[Your Name]





29

You reep what you saw



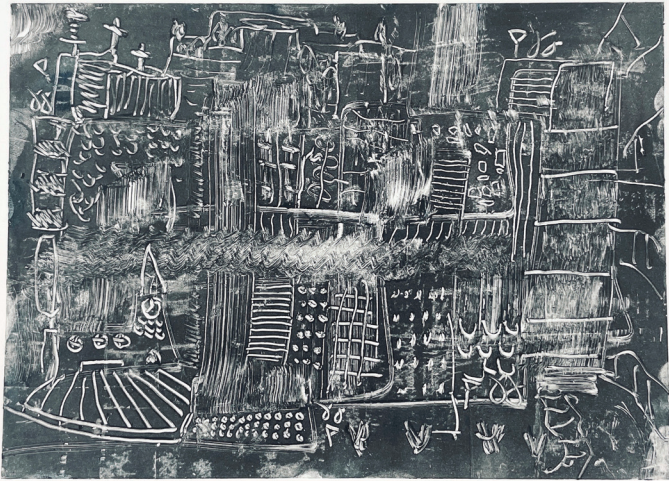


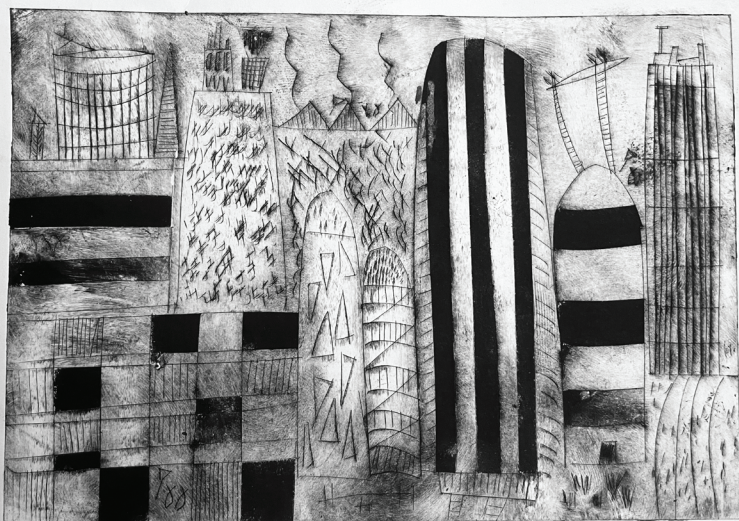


好景不长
好景不长
好景不长
好景不长



Marcus Miller · *City Fix*





“Are you there, Joseph? Don’t mind I shared your flowers with nearby graves. Seemed the right thing to do. Sure you’d approve. You there Joseph? Mom and Dad are still traveling. God knows where they are now. They weren’t prepared for your fatal overdose. There was something too intrusive about it. You know how they like to keep everything away and stay in a magic circle.

I was mad at you at first. I thought it was a dumb thing to do. I was sad after I was mad. Then I just didn’t care anymore. It’s the cycle of life. Turns out I don’t think death is a bad thing. Isn’t it liberating, the start of a whole new adventure? Can you hear me? Probably not. You seem far away. But you still seem around, not severed from it all like at first. Just far away. Death is more present now than you are. The voice from the grave marker is death’s voice. Death is like winter and spring is like birth. There can’t be one without the other, the way everything was created. Creation is perfect isn’t it? Joseph, you must know more than me now that you are dead.”

Thinking once more Joseph was living in some form made her smile, and a warmth filled her up as the sun shone through oak tree limbs reaching the right side of her face, her right bare forearm and the lower portion of her right neck separated by a hemp necklace.

“I hope you don’t mind Joseph, I can’t be sad about your death at all.”

One of her first convincing Joseph encounters was when she was sitting on the back porch and entered a dream-like state; she saw him in a pure light form, all golden, sitting in one of the chairs the way he usually did, overlooking the lawn, the marshes and harbor waters. She told him he was dead, but he wasn’t believing her. She assured him it was true; she thought it only right to tell him. Maybe he did know, and was only pranking her the way he liked to do. She figured if existence after death didn’t exist he wouldn’t show up like that.

She decided it was wise to say a prayer for Joseph in case it could help, and, furthermore, for the others in the graves around him, those that got one of Mrs. Cartwright's flowers. The local gardener had flagged her down as she went bicycling by and handed her a pot of them once she found out where she was headed.

"Jesus, if you see Joseph please make sure he's not wandering lost. He wasn't a bad brother, he wasn't a bad son. If he is lost, please shine bright for him to know which way to go. I know he'd head for your light if it was there just like a sea captain would head toward the harbor lighthouse in a fog to know the gateway to port. And Jesus, all the dead around me who I do not know, but they must have been OK, at least to some degree anyway, if you could help them too, I think that would be great. If they were terrible people, which I'm not saying they were, please help them be better."

She didn't know if what she was doing was any good, but it was a start, and nothing could be anything unless it was started.

The vegetable-tanned makes for nice patina—only problem is that extra month it takes to get a real film. Full-grain leather has it beat on time and tincture; the more exposed full-grain garners this carob shade that the eco-friendly stuff never reaches.

The white fluorescents of my granddad's atelier command no dyed pieces or light pigments so that the texture and looks are preserved best. Ear muffs clasp about my cauliflower ears and polyethylene sleeves brace my arms from whatever rotary cuts or snagging material. Airflow in here has been cut for a good while since this bulk order—the HVAC shut-out during overtime may slick my lungs grease-black and oil-green.

Bookbinder I goes on with the ruled markings as the leather tracks into the board to clamp into place. The skiving knife is to tell of the thickness and sluggard jumps and glides of shorn soon-to-be-tooling-wrap bow away from the sheet and here I call myself some artisan to pad and feel and stroke for layers even and matched. Have the tanners rush the process and after dehairing it could all tear now but they did a mighty fine job so that my work may go un-ridged and un-bumped.

Sweat builds my brow anew and the swipes of gristled hands let fly what shavings and debris on my flat canvas and hunger pains swell from my stomach into throat and there to taper and burnish the skin lies. Piece stuck in the clamp the bevel is to stretch and hit a half-right and pump slow along where my dragging swoop of material ebbs and shrinks into the air; lift and rotate to the other sides as I cannot chair myself and with pressured technique of years gone by the piece is near ready for dyeing.

The thin wrap sits stretched and again I graze the gravel-smooth flesh with the outs of my fingers and I know that as with every-

thing that leaves this place the beholder can never know the real beauty.

Within only this month are there to be hundreds of journals—to understand that the signatures and threads and bands can fall into hands other than mine own hardly satisfies me. I disrobe the arm-guards and knock off the earmuffs back onto the table and stamp to the switches to cut off the lights. Another cough forces out some percussive wheezes and thoughts of liquidating the company come back to mind. There to the fire escape I reach and look down on Las Cruces which has nurtured me for so long—a life of bookbinding is one my heritage has claimed for me, and with all my joys and sorrows I cherish it for turning me novice into master of a practice so ancient.

All the peace I could ever want—a never-ending release that could temper my mind into flat skin and my tongue stiff with the oils and dyes of passing creations. Let me die, let me turn a martyr for a lineage of work unbroken and untampered. Allow the throes of disease and death to take me, all so that the abilities of my son can develop this company fresh with the generation. To sacrifice not for myself, but for the work of centuries that no lifetime of mine could ever match; let the fruit die, so even more can come of the future.

```
#include <stdio.h>

int main() {
    // Life begins with a seed
    int seed = 42;

    // Time moves forward
    for(int day = 0; day < 365; day++) {
        // Growth happens slowly
        seed++;

        // Reflect on each day
        printf("Day %d: The seed grows, now it is %d\n", day + 1, seed);

        // Is it enough? Is it tall?
        if(seed >= 100) {
            printf("The tree stands tall, its roots deep.\n");
            break;
        }
    }

    // The cycle ends, but life continues
    return 0;
}
```

501 шаг от дверей моего дома до колодца, в котором живет одинокая забытая кобра.

На 33 шаге я обычно встречаю своего соседа, приверженца здорового образа жизни, который, сидя на скамейке, пьет какую-то зеленую гадость, что готовит ему жена. У соседа совершенно нет носа. Вернее, есть его некое подобие, почти неотличимое на одутловатом лице.

Когда я делаю 118 шаг я почти натыкаюсь на нищего, который бормочет слова книги Пророков, вызубренные им наизусть.

Я – обладатель нехитрого знания о Земле, о том, что она лишь крошечная песчинка в нескончаемом Космосе, совсем неразличимая во Вселенной. А уж я, живущий на ней, почти и не существую.

На 230 шаге торчит здоровенная словно лысая пальма. Но на самом верху, в ее кроне живет семейка летучих мышей, что шуршат в тишине ночи. Безмолвное их шуршание ничего не говорит мне. Быть может они кричат о помощи или готовятся к атаке. Легко перепутать одно с другим.

Почему именно пальма растет здесь, а не баобаб или тысячелетняя секвойя? Я уже перестал удивляться. Все, что происходит не поддается никаким предсказаниям. Долгие годы я жадно пытался узнать как можно больше, тщетно надеясь, что изобилие впечатлений откроет мне тайную связь между ними. И только недавно, прожив так долго, я понял, что связи не существует. Ее нет для меня. Мне не суждено что-либо понять. Я ничего не могу предсказать.

На 420 шаге - камень, о который регулярно спотыкаются заблудшие сюда путники. Никому еще не пришло в голову убрать его с дороги. Думаю, что и у меня нет прав на это.

500 шагов. Смерть маячит неподалеку.

Five hundred and one steps separate my house from a well inhabited by a solitary, forgotten cobra.

Step thirty-three is where I tend to encounter my health-freak neighbour, sitting on his bench and slurping green gunge concocted for him by his wife. My neighbour has absolutely no nose. Or rather, he has a semblance of nose, well-nigh indiscernible on his doughy face.

When taking step one hundred and eighteen I almost bump into a pauper mumbling lines from the Book of Prophets—lines he has learned by heart.

I am the possessor of unsophisticated knowledge about the Earth. I know that it is but a minuscule, imperceptible grain of sand amidst an infinite Cosmos, and that I, one of its denizens, scarcely exist at all.

At step two hundred and thirty there juts from the ground an immense bald palm tree. But its zenith is home to a family of bats that rustle in the nocturnal silence. Their wordless rustling tells me nothing. Perhaps they are clamouring for help; perhaps they are readying themselves for an attack. It is easy to mistake one for the other.

Why does a *palm* grow here, rather than a baobab or a millennium-old sequoia? I have ceased to wonder at such things. There is no predicting anything that happens. I spent long years in the ravenous pursuit of knowledge—as much as I could amass; I lived in the vain hope that a surfeit of impressions would shed light on some secret link between them. Only lately, with so many decades under my belt, have I come to realise that no such link exists. Or at least not for me. I am fated to understand nothing whatever. And there is nothing I can predict.

At step four hundred and twenty there lies a stone which time and again trips up wayfarers who have strayed into these parts. As yet no one has thought to remove it from the road. I do not believe myself entitled to do so either.

Step five hundred. Death looms close at hand.

Все на свете несчастны как нерождённый Иисус
Оцените уровень безумия:
Грустить из-за того что тебя не распнут

*

белый снег догоняет белую птицу
и небеса всё так же светлы
как до похорон

*

теорема тоски
ландыш заглядывает в окна
и видит что окон нет

гвозди держат ржавчину
смерть играет в родину

пизда играет в роженицу
бурич умер а мы всё так же
в сорок третьем

*

невоспетый
неспетый
неспелый

как мандарин

безлётный
безлетный
безтёплый

расстроенный
раздвоенный
расстрелянный

вывернутый никем ничем
на изнанку которой нет

плащ из кожи
клещ из кожи
прочь из кожи

как в том фильме

холокост
клей для обоев
который плохо держит обои
бездомных

*

Стихотворение написанное в рамках
В ранках
В санках
Покойника
Рассыпалось
Расстроилось
Разрушилось
Разранилось пуще прежнего
Беловежскотекучемстительномстительно
Даже птицы ройские
Стали райскими
Даже спицы тонкие
Стали танками
Аккуратно
Оглядывайся теперь на дорогу
Когда идёшь по улице
А вокруг темно

*

Мы выпали в осадок этого дня рождённые украденными
Саламандры мурашек прокатились по коже
И когда ввысь с земли пошло тепло упавшего в трещину
[солнца
Все увидели что неба больше нет а фильтры и насосы из
[последних усилий
Качают воздух после ядерного взрыва

*

А я без имени как

Бог без религии

Глаз без дна

Глазная бездна

Главная беда

Славная тризна

Сладка призма

Изюма хурмы печали слёз апельсинового сока колы чувств
[лимонада чиханий]

Ручей из сахара из которого не выйдет выпить ни воды ни
[крови]



Cecelia Chapman
Moon is a Dagger